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General and complete disarmament: transparency in armaments

United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum*

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* This information was received after the submission of the main report.

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II. Information received from Governments

A. Composite table of replies of Governments[1]

State	Data on exports	Data on imports	Explanation submitted in note verbale	Background information
Grenada	nil	nil		no
Mauritius	nil	nil		no
Namibia	nil	nil		no

[1] With the submissions of Grenada, Mauritius and Namibia, the number of replies received from Governments stands at 118.

Annex

Views received from Governments in accordance with paragraph 4 (a) of General Assembly resolution 57/75

European Union

[Original: English]
[19 September 2003]

Resolution 57/75 requests States Members of the United Nations to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development and on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction.

The States members of the European Union continue to consider transparency in armaments an important instrument in building confidence and security between States. The Register of Conventional Arms is an important and concrete measure in this respect.

The Register provides data on international arms transfers of those categories of conventional arms which are potentially destabilizing when accumulated excessively. It serves to enhance transparency, build confidence and promote better understanding among States. The States members of the European Union are committed to securing the widest possible participation in the Register and improving its effectiveness. In this context, contacts of the Union with non-participating States in support of securing wider participation have shown that only in exceptional cases, non-participation is motivated by disagreement with the concept embodied in the Register.

All States Members of the United Nations are encouraged to submit data promptly to the Register, including "nil" reports. The States members of the European Union furthermore believe that inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production would make the Register more complete.

The States members of the European Union welcome all efforts to strengthen further the role of the Register in the field of conventional arms control. In this respect, the members of the European Union welcome the initiative by the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs, together with Germany, Canada, Japan and the Netherlands, to organize regional and subregional seminars on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized reporting system on military expenditures in 2002. The States members of the European Union are pleased with the results of the workshops held so far in Ghana, Namibia, Peru and Indonesia. The workshops proved to be an excellent opportunity to explain the purpose and the importance of these United Nations instruments in the field of transparency in armaments.

In 2002 the Register celebrated its tenth anniversary. The States members of the European Union believe that now is the time to develop further and deepen the Register. The Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms met in July 2003. The European Union urges all States formally to support substantial recommendations from the Group of Governmental Experts meeting to facilitate significant progress that will improve the Register and make it even more complete.

The States members of the European Union agree that transparency in armaments is important and that measures aimed at enhancing such transparency should be developed. They would like to point out, however, that measures in the field of conventional arms should be distinguished from those aimed at increased transparency in the field of weapons of mass destruction. If such a distinction is not made, the viability of the Register would be affected and increased participation and transparency jeopardized.

The States members of the European Union, for their part, will continue to participate actively in all appropriate forums to discuss transparency measures which can contribute to increased confidence and greater security among all States Members of the United Nations.

The States members of the European Union are committed to the effective functioning of the Register and its further development and call upon all Members of the United Nations to provide the data and information requested.

League of Arab States

[Original: Arabic]
[17 October 2003]

The States members of the League of Arab States wish to reaffirm their position, dated 2 October 2000, regarding transparency in armaments, particularly in respect of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, as set forth in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/257/Add.1, annex) as follows:

The members of the League of Arab States have for some years past been expressing their views with regard to the entire matter of transparency in armaments, embracing as it does the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. These views are clear and well established and are based on a general orientation with respect to international disarmament issues and a particular, regional one that is determined by the specific character of the situation in the Middle East. The points set forth hereunder convey the Arab position in this regard.

The members of the League of Arab States advocate transparency in armaments as a means of enhancing international peace and security and believe that, in order to be successful, any transparency mechanism must be guided by certain basic principles: it must be balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory, and it must enhance the national, regional and international security of all States in conformity with international law.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms represents a long-overdue first attempt by the international community to address the transparency issue at a global level. Despite the fact that the potential value of the Register as a global confidence-building measure and early-warning mechanism cannot be questioned, it has encountered a number of problems. Most noticeably, approximately one half of the States Members of the United Nations have consistently refrained from submitting data to the Register.

In this context, the members of the League of Arab States are of the view that despite the slight change recommended by the Group of Governmental Experts this year, the concerns of the Arab States remain unchanged; they consider that the scope of the Register must be expanded, particularly as the experience of past years has shown that the Register, which is limited to seven categories of conventional arms,

will not attract universal participation. Numerous States, including the members of the League of Arab States, do not consider that the Register, given its present limited scope, adequately meets their security needs. The future success of the Register is therefore contingent upon the willingness of the members of the international community to engage in greater transparency and to build greater confidence. In our view, and as envisaged in the Register's founding resolution (General Assembly resolution 46/36 L of 9 December 1991), an expanded Register including data on advanced conventional weapons, on weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and on high technology with military applications would represent a more balanced, more comprehensive and less discriminatory instrument which would attract a larger number of regular participants.

The Middle East region represents a special case in this context, one where the qualitative imbalance in armaments is striking and where transparency and confidence can only come about if approached in a balanced and comprehensive way. Applying transparency in the Middle East region to seven categories of conventional weapons, while ignoring more advanced, more sophisticated or more lethal armaments, such as weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, is an approach that is neither balanced nor comprehensive. It will not yield the desired results, especially since the Register does not take into consideration the existing situation in the Middle East, where Israel continues its occupation of Arab territories, maintains its possession of the most lethal weapons of mass destruction and is still the only State in the region that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as it persists in defying repeated calls by the international community to accede to the Treaty and to place all of its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It was this that prompted the States parties to the Treaty meeting at the 2000 Review Conference to stress that it was essential for Israel to take these steps.

The members of the League of Arab States regret that the Group of Governmental Experts did not go so far as to expand the scope of the Register to include military holdings and procurement from national production and that it also failed to incorporate weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. This is incompatible with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, by which the Register was established.

This failure indicates the deadlock that has afflicted the operation of the Register and its consequent inadequacy in its present form to function as an effective means of building confidence or as an early-warning mechanism.

In the light of the above, the members of the League of Arab States are of the view that their aforesaid concerns must be addressed effectively and in such a manner as to ensure universal participation in the Register and hence its fulfilment of the role assigned to it as a means of building confidence and an early-warning mechanism that can be relied upon.